

SOURCES OF LOVE AND HATE

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There can thus be for him no mere indifference, no accidental deprivation, no mere loss of satisfaction. That is to say, loss is always felt by him as due to a personal action on the part of his mother. If he is not satisfied, it is she who fails to satisfy him, who is indeed felt to be actively hostile. He is being actively frustrated by persons, just as at other times he gains comfort and satisfaction from persons. This primitive personalising of all experiences and events has been summed up by Ernest Jones and Joan Riviere as : *Privation is equivalent to frustration*. Privation is always felt as frustration, in the earliest and deepest mental levels.

The sense of complete helplessness which the infant feels before the stress of urgent unsatisfiable need is in the phantasy life of adults and children alike the ultimate psychic disaster. The feeling of being kept in a state of helpless tension by the intense wish for love and food, together with the resulting impulses of rage, is something that cannot be tolerated. It means suffering psychic death, and in phantasy every person will inflict death upon others rather than endure this himself. Our knowledge of this psychic experience is arrived at not only by observation of actual infants but by the study of the phantasies of children and adults under analysis.

Freud has come to believe that the one actual experience in which this situation of absolute helplessness is most completely realised by the child is that of birth, which thus becomes the prototype of all helplessness. Later situations of helplessness before the onset of unsatisfiable wish (and undischageable rage) are apprehended as foreshadowings of a state of absolute helplessness similar to that of birth. The approach of such a state before the surge of

unsatisfied
needs is experienced by the ego as *anxiety*, and
the normal
result of this feeling of anxiety is that the ego
does whatever
is possible, either to reduce or to satisfy desire.

And just as the infant will do his utmost, by
cries of
increasing intensity, to act upon the parents
who alone can
give him satisfaction, so, if his cries do not
bring this result,
he will use every desperate psychic means
within his power
to lessen the actual tension of desire.

If, when the child cries for comfort, his
parents bring it
to him within a limited time, well and good. The
child's ego
has achieved its end. If, however, the parents
do not come,